

Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

May 14, 2010

Working sessions: 8:00/9:00 MDT/CDT - 11:00/12:00 MDT/CDT

Council Meeting: 11:00/12:00 MDT/CDT-2:00/3:00 MDT/CDT

Conducted via teleconference from:

Chadron State College, Chadron, Nebraska

Nebraska Education Telecommunications, Lincoln, Nebraska

Ruth Miller, chair, opened the video-conference meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council at 11:00 a.m. MDT (Mountain Daylight Time) on May 14, 2010, from the teleconference site at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska. Council members also joined the video conference from Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) in Lincoln, Nebraska at 12:00 noon CDT (Central Daylight Time). Ruth noted the posting of a copy of the Open Meetings Act in both locations. Those in attendance made self introductions.

Chadron site:

Members present: Melody Hobson, Heather Gill, Terry Rohren, Ruth Miller, Connie Shockley, Deanna Schulze, and Laura Good Buffalo.

Also in attendance–ECICC Staff: Terry Rohren, facilitator; *Visitors and presenters:* Kim Madsen, Laurie Miller, Sherry Retzlaff, Autumn Calkins, and Donna DeForge.

Lincoln site:

Members present: Kathy Anderson, Pam Dobrovolny, Carol Fichter, Cheryl Hammond, Jane Happe, Sara Johnson, Diane Lewis, Carol McClain, Michelle Merrill, Julie Middendorf, Amy Pair, Deb Ross, Janet Staehr, and Linda Zinke.

Also in attendance–ECICC Staff: Susan Dahm, secretary; *Technical Assistants:* National Child Care Information Center–Rae Anderson; Head Start State-based Training and Technical Assistance–Heather Fox; Munroe Meyer Institute –Mark Smith; NDHHS–Lynne Brehm, Amy Bunnell, Paula Eureka (pm); *Guests:* Beaky Veak–Nebraska Children and Families Foundation.

Members absent:

Sarah Briggs, Maya Chilese, Eric Dunning, Sara Johnson, Eleanor Kirkland, Carol McClain, Susan McWilliams, Tammy Mittelstaedt, Nancy Montgomery, Carrie Rasmussen, Stephanie Rau, Todd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Leisha Suckstorf, Joyce Thomas, and Carey Winkler.

MEETING AGENDA:

1. Opening and Announcements:

i. Approval of minutes

Members reviewed the minutes of the February 12, 2010 ECICC meeting provided in their pre-meeting packets. Julie Middendorf asked that the minutes be corrected to read that she was not present at the meeting.

Motion: Laura Good Buffalo; seconded, Deb Ross: To approve the ECICC minutes of February 12, 2010, as corrected. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no abstentions.

ii. Approve change of date for November 2011 meeting

Terry Rohren informed the Council that due to scheduling conflicts with meeting sites in Lincoln for the approved date of November 18, 2011, the date for this meeting would have to be changed. November 4, 2011 also presented scheduling conflicts with other groups.

Action: The Council approved by consensus to change the meeting date to December 2, 2011.

iii. Meeting materials

Materials were inadvertently left out of the meeting packets. To be included were the final report on the Nebraska Legislative session, the current legislative interim studies and the State

Advisory Grant priorities and objectives. Terry will electronically send the missing materials to members and technical assistants.

2. Reports from Working Sessions

a. Family Leadership Team

The Family Leadership Team met in a working session via teleconference from 8:00/9:00-9:00/10:00 a.m. in Chadron/Lincoln, respectively. Deanna Schulze reported on the group's discussion of the parent leadership training opportunities provided by PTI-Nebraska and the Munroe Meyers Institute. ECICC members representing families of children with disabilities requested copies of the Family Guide when it is finished, and updates to information about the EDN website, Medicaid, and the Part C Annual Performance Report. The group also discussed grants and visitation training and how it impacts families. Mark Smith noted that they would like to see action regarding the Early Intervention Alliance website, but no action was recommended to date. He asked that it "stay on the [Council] radar" for future action.

b. Gaps and Barriers Committee (GBC)

The Gaps and Barriers Committee met in working session via teleconference from 9:00/10:00 a.m. to 11:00/12:00 noon in Chadron/Lincoln, respectively. Chairperson Heather Gill reported that the committee discussed data collection from wider sources; the current kindergarten report with some explanation; an update on FRIENDS, which is moving from pilot status to implementation; and the Part C Family Survey, which was just completed with a very good response rate. Notice of upcoming activities included Child Find, Helping Babies from the Bench activities, and the annual meetings of Services Coordinators and Planning Region Teams.

Carol McClain informed the group about the feedback on the Part C Annual Performance Report (APR) received from the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), which put Nebraska in the highest tier of approval by OSEP. Nebraska has received a "meets determinations" evaluation for Part C for three years in a row. She thanked everyone across the state who participated in the data collection and review for the APR. Improvement activities in the coming year will continue to provide technical assistance and training, especially in the areas of identification and the collecting and reporting of accurate data.

Heather told the group that she would like feedback/information from every Gaps and Barriers committee members regarding gaps and barriers on the local level.

c. Legislative and Communications Committee (LCC)

Committee chairperson, Jane Happe, reviewed the discussion of the LCC during a conference call in April during which they reviewed bills that passed in the Legislature. She noted that \$180,000 was cut from the Early Childhood grant program over the next 2 year period as revenues continue to be below projections, which may mean additional future cuts. Groups are trying to get statutory language in place to at least retain the current funding. Melody Hobson explained that 5% cuts and being made to state agency budgets that may mean a reduction in the amount of technical assistance they are able to provide to districts, community partners and others across the state. The current budget still allows funding of a few new programs, but without as much start up money as usual. Ruth Miller noted that drops in revenues also affect what they are able to do on a local level. Funding for early childhood does not have the longevity in the budget as other programs that sometimes mean they are the first to go. Because they are not a mandatory service it makes them very vulnerable. She said young parents must be encouraged to become advocates at school board meetings and to show as much representation as high school parents.

Jane provided an overview of the legislative interim studies before the next session. Carol Fichter encouraged promoting evidence of the positive difference made with high quality programs. Becky

Veak told the group about the NCFF website, <http://www.advancingearlychildhood.org> that has been designed as a resource for legislators and others to advocate for early childhood. She encouraged members to publicize availability of this information to help groups make well thought out decisions.

3. Panel of Local Presenters

Chairperson Ruth Miller introduced the panel of local presenters: Laurie Miller, Early Childhood Program in Crawford; Autumn Calkins, Services Coordinators from Chadron; Sherry Retzlaff, Early Development Director from Chadron; and Donna DeForge, Panhandle Head Start Program, in Gering, Nebraska. Terry Rohren had provided questions before the meeting that the panelists addressed in their presentations.

Autumn and Sherry described their challenges to increase awareness of the Early Development Network (EDN) through newspaper interviews, district newsletters, and contacts with child care providers and preschools. The size of the region is a challenge and schedules sometimes require driving over 400 miles in a single day. Other challenges include availability of space in preschools—especially in light of requirements in Rule 11, and finding funding for medical appointments for costs not paid by insurance, such as travel expenses. They noted that the majority of families travel to Denver or Rapid City for special services. They have found helpful cooperation especially through Denver in providing travel vouchers and making referrals to EDN. They also noted that they have good collaboration with schools with families as a focus, which is very positive.

Donna DeForge is a behavioral health coordinator for the Panhandle Head Start program that has three partnerships with public schools in the region. Dr. Mark Hald works with educators once a month to discuss behavior situations. They also have a partnership with Sandra Kline. One of their challenges is hiring and retaining teacher aides. This not only affects costs for training, it also affects behavior issues of children in the classroom when there is continual turnover. Donna said there is a need for more services for children ages birth to three with a long waiting list for Early Head Start. She noted they are seeing many more teen parents, some as young as 14 and 15. They are looking to partner with service units and others to provide ongoing classes in parenting and understanding of mental health/behavior issues in young children.

Laurie Miller told about several accomplishments they have seen with young children in the Crawford Early Childhood Program. Their biggest challenge is time required to meet each child on an individual level. Of concern is the new kindergarten entry age and whether parents will hold their children back. Because there is no other option for early education in Crawford, this may result in a group of children who will not be receiving any kind of preschool education for that year. State aid to Crawford may also impact the preschool program; however, they have a school board and parents who recognize the importance of it, so there is support. They are grateful they have an early childhood grant to help support the preschool.

In discussion, Ruth Miller proposed that collection of data of children who sit out a year before kindergarten would be valuable information. Melody Hobson further explained the rationale in Rule 11 and state statute that regulates the age eligibility for free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

Ruth thanked the panelists for joining the meeting. Terry Rohren announced that the scheduled presenter for the family story was unable to attend because of issues with child care.

4. Public Comment:

Kim Madsen, past member of the ECICC from Chadron, thanked the group for coming to Chadron and complimented the Council for their continued hard work on behalf of children and families. She said that as she has traveled around the state and beyond, she feels that Nebraska is doing well in collaboration and partnership in early childhood education.

5. State Advisory Committee and Head Start updates

Terry Rohren and Melody Hobson reported for Eleanor Kirkland.

a. Early Childhood Systems Team Charter

The group discussed the most recent version of the draft charter for the Early Childhood System Team. Most concerns were with specific wording that would keep the language flexible enough to be able to expand collaboration with other agencies and possibly expand the scope of responsibility for this team. Representation on the team was also discussed, specifically whether parents/families should be included under types of memberships. Melody Hobson proposed that the wording be changed to: “membership should include, but not be limited to representatives from the following divisions and agencies...” The group continued to discuss the relationship of the Systems Team and the Council and their respective responsibilities and the requirements of the State Advisory Grant. The consensus in the discussion was that the Early Childhood Systems Team takes the work of the Council to develop a product, e.g. a strategic plan, and that the ECICC informs the work of the Early Childhood Systems Team, which would always seek approval and guidance from the Council—i.e., they would not undertake an initiative without Council approval. At the end of discussion, Ruth Miller called for the motion.

Motion: Deb Ross; seconded, Melody Hobson: To approve the draft of the Early Childhood Systems Team charter.

- Deb Ross agreed to change the motion to include the language proposed by Melody Hobson during discussion: “Early Childhood System Team membership should include, but not be limited to representatives from the following divisions and agencies involved in early childhood service delivery in Nebraska...”
- In further discussion, Carol McClain continued to express concern about wording in Section IV: “ECICC will advise and contribute information to the Early Childhood Systems Team...”
- The motion with the agreed language change carried by a majority vote. There was one opposition.

b. Head Start Technical Assistance

Terry Rohren informed the group about possible technical assistance changes for Head Start that might follow federal re-examination of contracts. There is likely to be less assistance in the future for both the grantees and statewide.

c. State Advisory Committee grant

Terry Rohren reported that the grant writing committee and the Early Childhood Systems team had focused the State Advisory Committee grant application around the three priority areas identified by the ECICC. However, in developing the grant proposal they realized that it was only possible to fund two of the priorities: school readiness and an early childhood unified data system. Melody Hobson and Eleanor subsequently met with the Governor’s Office to address concerns that were raised about language, budget and authority, especially as it related to a data system. This essentially required rewriting the grant application. Terry will e-mail the next draft to ECICC members and will post it on the ECICC website. A special ECICC meeting and public hearing will be held to approve the application before it is submitted. Application deadline is August 1, 2010.

6. Update on Home Visitation Funding

Paula Eurek gave an overview of the provisions in the law as they relate to home visitation funding, however they are still waiting for specific guidance on areas that the federal agencies not yet interpreted. Of priority importance are needs assessment that must be completed within certain timelines, however identification of items to be assessed and who completes the assessment is still unclear. The Nebraska Health and Human Services LifeSpan Unit feels the obligation to do this due to the funding affected. The funding will support prenatal and early childhood home visitation for

several high risk categories. Paula answered questions from the group and said she would provide updates again for the ECICC meetings in August and/or November.

7. Rule Changes in NDE

Rule 11: Melody Hobson reported that the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is undertaking revision of Rule 11-Regulations for Early Childhood Education Programs [in school districts]. NDE is meeting internally with their legal office and others regarding revisions needed. Diane Kvasnicka is in charge of the revision process. Later they will be actively seeking input from stakeholder groups.

Rule 16: NDE is developing Rule 16 to assist early childhood programs that want to be accredited. Stakeholders and agencies are looking at the process to determine what should be covered in the new rule, which will be short. It is not setting up the state to accredit programs.

8. Update on Child Care Licensing Regulations

The proposed revisions to the regulations have been reviewed and returned to DHHS from the Governor's Office. It is now in the queue for public hearings that are needed before further action is taken.

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Recognition of members ending terms
- Update on needs assessment for home visitation
- Presentation on UNMC child care survey (Lynne Brehm)

10. Other

Terry Rohren will conduct a poll of the membership regarding the teleconference format used for the meeting.

With no other items to be discussed, the Council adjourned at 3:15/2:15 CDT/MDT.

Next meeting: August 27, 2010 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, NE.

MEETING Materials:

Pre-meeting by mail:

- ✓ Agenda: ECICC May 14, 2010 meeting
- ✓ Minutes: February 12, 2010 ECICC meeting
- ✓ Minutes: February 12, 2010 Gaps and Barriers Committee meeting
- ✓ Minutes: April 8, 2010 Steering Committee meeting
- ✓ Draft: Early Childhood System Team Charter
- ✓ Revised Charter of the Gaps and Barriers Committee (approved Feb. 12, 2010)

Post-meeting by e-mail:

- ✓ Draft: Nebraska State Advisory Council Grant Application
- ✓ Early Childhood Legislation Passed or Likely to Pass in 2010 Session
- ✓ Nebraska Interim Studies That Relate to Early Childhood
- ✓ Status Report: Nebraska Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO)–May 2010